

News Release



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MSHA fines Tri-Star Mining \$180,000 for safety violations *Mine's action found to have contributed to fatalities*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has fined Tri-Star Mining Inc. \$180,000 for safety violations contributing to an accident in Barton, Md., on April 17 that resulted in the death of two of the company's employees.

Two miners were fatally injured while operating equipment in the pit when an unstable highwall collapsed. The collapse of the highwall released approximately 93,000 tons of rock and materials that filled the pit and covered both pieces of equipment, trapping the miners inside.

"Two miners lost their lives because federal safety laws were not followed," said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. "Mine operators must be held accountable for their actions, and MSHA will not hesitate to issue stiff penalties against companies that fail to comply with health and safety regulations."

MSHA identified and cited three violations that contributed to the accident. The violations involved failure to establish and follow a ground control plan; failure to correct hazardous conditions and allowing miners to work under dangerous highwalls and a spoil bank; and failure to conduct adequate examinations of the highwall and spoil bank. Each violation carries the maximum civil penalty of \$60,000.

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